

Corps Connector

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We Are Called to JOY
June Retreat Page 3

Ignatius and Me



Washington DC/
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& Northern
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Corps Connector

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Dick Bowling, Editor
Send submissions or comments to
dbowling@ivcusa.org.

Photos by Dick Bowling
unless
otherwise noted

“One thing I know for sure, I will never ever Journal.” That’s what I wrote on my evaluation of journaling at my IVC Orientation ten years ago. It was September, 2005; we were at the Loyola retreat house in Faulkner and we had been introduced to the spiritual practice of journaling that afternoon

It was right after I got home. It was early in the morning—quite early, as a matter of fact, maybe four, four thirty—the Holy Spirit suggested to me that I give journaling another try; I did and as I began to journal, to my great surprise, this time everything fell into place and I’ve been journaling nearly every morning since. That same Spirit showed what was blocking me: it was so simple; at our Orientation we practiced journal-writing at about three in the afternoon and at that time of day I can’t write anything. What I needed was the quiet of the early-early morning.

Of course as time passes things evolve and journaling is no exception; not so long ago my journaling began to segue into a different Ignatian practice: Imaginative Prayer. This past April, I started to compose these prayers regularly during my journaling time, and to combine them in a little book I call “The Healing Miracles of Jesus.”

You may have used this book, during the June retreat if you selected the “Imaginative-Prayer” option on Tuesday afternoon.

I’d like to ask: Do you find when you read the New Testament, and you come to, say, the story of Bartimaeus, the blind beggar of Jericho; does that story tear through your mind like a DVD on a fast-fast-forward rampage and your brain on pause? This happens to me all the time.

The question is, how do I slow this process down? I believe Ignatius found a way and in the process invented the Imaginative Prayer. Did these New Testament stories zip through his mind like they do ours? I think they did. Being an original thinker, did he decide to compose his own prayer story based on the ‘raw material’ from the New Testament but expand on it? And—if it were a healing story—did he ask himself such questions as who is present in the story besides Jesus? Who is the person in need of healing? What is his or her condition: paralyzed? sick or dying? demon possessed? blind? lame? How did they get in this condition? Who am I in the story: the victim? Jesus? a friend? a bystander? This approach requires the story to be read very carefully. This then is a major benefit of Imaginative praying: it slows us down and makes us concentrate on what we’re reading.

The next thing Ignatius might have done was outline the story, at least that’s what I did when I composed my newest prayer story based on Luke 7: 1-10: “Healing the Centurion’s Servant.” I’ve never been big on outlining, I like to plunge right in and write, but this time I made an outline to keep the story details before my eyes.

Did Ignatius also discover something else I found? That in every prayer story I write, although it’s pure fiction, I fall in love with the people I create. In “Healing the Paralyzed Man,” Sam, by his dedication to building his tower, becomes very dear to me. In “Healing the Centurion’s Servant” I deeply admire the centurion for his humility and his gentleness toward his servant, Bart.

And finally, did Ignatius once again find what I found when I compose an Imaginative Prayer that—in a way—I become a co-evangelist with Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? What I mean is this. Each time I compose a prayer story I am creating a new and original something for the gospel itself; bringing life to the stories; feeling the love of Jesus, his caring, his compassion for the person he cures being transferred to me. These feelings, this love, caring and compassion are part of the original New Testament story but only implicitly and can easily be overlooked; while in my story I can make them explicit and make them a living part of the gospel.

Put it another way: Did you ever feel—and this may sound far out—that the evangelists *intentionally* left their Jesus stories sparse? It’s always struck me so. Could it be the Spirit left room in the gospels for us to create the details, expand on them and make our insights part of the living story of Jesus?

Dick Bowling

FOR MANY, THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE JUNE retreat was an exercise Peggy O'Brien and Richard Urban suggested to the retreat planning team. They proposed an essay project based on the "This I Believe" radio show hosted by Edward R. Murrow over 50 years ago. This project engages people in writing and sharing essays describing the core values that guide their daily lives. Peggy and Richard felt this would be a great way for us to deepen our understanding of the joy of God's presence in our lives and sharing our stories of joy. The retreat team agreed and two weeks before the start of the retreat, sent out an email asking for our participation.

We were requested to start by exploring some of the thousands of short essays on the "This I Believe" website; thinking about what gives us joy in our own lives and writing the story of our joy in a short essay (less than 500 words). Opportunities were provided to exchange essays and work together to polish them both before and during the retreat.



WORD Clip Art

The Baltimore, Northern Virginia and DC/Maryland Regions of the IVC got together for our spring retreat on June 8 through 10 at Loyola-on-the-Potomac at Faulkner Maryland. In keeping with our City Groups study of Pope Francis' book, *The Joy of the Gospel*, the retreat theme was "Called to Joy." The retreat was unique because we did not invite a well-known retreat facilitator to lead us, but made it a retreat for and by the members of IVC. A team of IVC volunteers, spiritual reflectors and regional directors worked from February till June to make it a joyful experience. The turnout was large, filling the house with over 50 retreatants. The level of enthusiasm and joy that was present from the beginning rose throughout the three days as we responded to the inspiring program.

The retreat was organized around three meditations—one each day:

- 'Called to be People of the Gospel' presented by Rea McDonnell, SSND
- 'Obstacles to Joy' presented by Jean Noon
- 'Go Forth with Joy' presented by Mark Wong and Mike Goggin

Each meditation was immediately followed by 45 minutes of private individual reflection and then a 45 minute period of small group faith-sharing. Each group was made up of 8-10 people led by an IVC Reflector. This mixture of private time and small group discussion was very effective in helping all retreatants to get the most from the excellent meditations. As a further aid to spiritual devotion, Father Jack O'Hara celebrated Mass for us each of the three days. He also made himself available for individual confessions.

On Tuesday afternoon, three 45 minute periods were set aside for each of us to choose the following prayer workshops:

- Self-guided Imaginative Prayer
- Expressing Joy in poetry
- Praying through art
- Praying the liturgy of the hours
- Meditative dance
- Lectio Divina

Many retreatants used these periods to try new methods of prayer to enliven their spiritual lives. To balance the activity and interaction of the days' programs, we observed the Grand Silence each day from 9 PM to 9 AM. This allowed ample time for individual prayer, peaceful rest and contemplation.

On Tuesday evening, those people who were willing to share their "This I Believe" stories read them aloud to the rest of us. So many people were willing to do this we broke into two groups. The stories of joy were inspiring testimonies to the many graces the Lord has sent us—from the love of family and friends to overcoming challenges through the help of the Holy Spirit and even to the joy of discovering that God's presence in times of sickness and trial is enough to sustain us.

Those of us who attended were inspired and uplifted by the retreat. We look forward to the fall retreat scheduled for 14 – 16 September at Loyola-on-the-Potomac. We encourage all who missed the June retreat to join us in the fall. You won't regret it!

Bill Stieglitz

The following two essays were written for the “This I Believe” portion of the June Retreat (see page 3)

Thoughts on Joy

Joy...

I have been bringing to mind moments of joy during this long life of mine. I found many but for constraint of space and time I will share some joyous time spent with my sisters.

We are five girls, who for reasons beyond our control ended up living quite far apart. We are all married and collectively have 13 children and 15 grandchildren.

Our places of residence are: Santiago, Chile; Bern, Switzerland; Ystad, Sweden; and Virginia, USA.

In 1988 our Mom was diagnosed with a brain tumor and a bad prognosis. Obviously we all rushed home to be with our parents. This kind of “reunion of the five” was absolutely marvelous and full of joy, even though the reason for our gathering was not the best. We five had not been together for 18 years. At the time we arrived, Mother had had surgery, the tumor had been removed and she was doing great, full of optimism and desire to enjoy the presence of her daughters.

We took turns showing off things we had learned, particularly in the “cooking” department, and just fooling around to entertain our parents. We joked, played games, and recalled our childhood and the different things we did to enrage our parents. Of course we fought about the stories we told when we remembered them quite differently from one or another sister. At night, after our parents went to bed, we gathered to chat about all and nothing, just to prolong those moments of being together.

The next “reunion” was for the wedding of a Swedish niece in 2005. Again the laughter and the memories we shared made our husbands feel out of place as they were not part of that world of ours. They jokingly called themselves “The Adjoining Outsiders”. It’s amazing to me, when I reflect on our relationship, to realize how strong are the bonds that we share. These reunions are always full of joy!

In fact the bride and the groom stayed in town for a week to share with all of us as much as they could. They were well aware that these types of gatherings are not easily repeated. So as a large group we did a lot of sightseeing, eating, laughing, drinking and being merry.

The next gathering was to celebrate the “70th Birthday” of our Swiss sister. We had an entire week of celebration in Bern and surrounding areas since a niece lives in Basel and a nephew in Zurich. The same pattern of laughter and jokes continues, adding or subtracting to the stories we share. We joke that—as we get old—the memory is playing more tricks and we keep changing the results or endings of the events.

Just reflecting a little on these moments of joy I realized how blessed we are to have been raised in a family where the bonds of love were so solidly implanted in our hearts.

—Eliana Turina

I’ve never had the discipline to regularly keep a journal (Sorry, Dick Bowling!). Cece, my first wife, gave me a journal for our 33rd wedding anniversary that I reread a few days ago while I was thinking about this exercise. The first page was a tender note from her. At a later time she was in a rage and crossed out some of the tender sentiments she wrote on that first page and tore some of the pages I wrote. But the journal was mine, and I have turned to it from time to time since then. In one of the first pages of the journal I wrote of being relieved that Cece had safely returned from Timberline. She had been there alone, and in my meditation I noted that recently she had complained of being drowsy. As I reflect on this now, I wonder if the drowsiness was an early indicator of the lung cancer that eventually caused her death. But the journal was a beautiful gift and a tangible reminder of our love, for better or worse.

Pat and I had our first date on a springtime evening in 2002. What woman could resist dinner out and seats at the Kennedy Center for a performance by the National Symphony, with me no less? But that Saturday coincided with the Celebration of First Communion for the RE classes. So our Plan B was to share the grapes and cheese that had been left over after the reception ended as we drove into Washington. I started to realize what a joyful woman, full of surprises, Pat was.

I made my *Cursillo* on the first weekend of October 2002. At the kickoff talk the first night the rector suggested we each pray for what we most wanted in our lives. Pat and my relationship had taken off, but hadn’t reached “orbital velocity” yet, and I prayed for clarity and grace to discern where our relationship was destined to go. A few weeks later, on Halloween evening, I was at home, relaxing and watching TV and the doorbell rang. “Probably just some high school kids by this hour” I thought as I went to answer the door. It was Pat, who greeted me with a beautiful smile and treated me to the most memorable Halloween of my life. There’s a photo on the door of the refrigerator of us dancing at our wedding reception that shows Pat’s joyful smile.

I saw that smile again one day last December. Pat had had a helluva day, and I caused it by having a seizure. I don’t remember having a seizure or any of the treatment I received from the medical personnel at the hospital. I woke up after several hours of unconsciousness and the first vision I had was of Pat and her beautiful smile, full of gratitude and love. Trick or treat!

Is it be possible to be allergic to joy? Many people in our world seem to be; Pope Francis is the anti-allergen to the world. This humble, holy man who says that he’s a sinner doesn’t have an agenda to humiliate and shame us into reformation. Instead he just wants to tell us about his friend Jesus who was executed but rose from death to life. The Pentecost story in Acts tells us that when the first preachers proclaimed this they were thought to be intoxicated. A clever image from Sacred Space last week says they were “preaching under the influence of the Spirit, not spirits.” Our egos seem to keep us from being as uninhibited and joyful as they were. Why?

—John Durkin

Ignatian Spirituality in the Age of Pope Francis

Save
the
Date



Fall
Retreat

Sept.

14-16,

2015

Loyola on the
Potomac

Retreat
House

“IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY IN THE AGE OF POPE FRANCIS” will be the theme of the 2015 Ignatian Volunteer Corps Fall Retreat, jointly sponsored by the Baltimore, DC / Metro Maryland and Northern Virginia regions of IVC. The retreat will take place Monday morning through Wednesday noon, September 14-16, at the beautiful Loyola-on-the-Potomac Retreat House in Faulkner, Maryland.

The cost of the retreat is \$220 per person for the full retreat, or \$110 per night, payable to IVC through your regional director. Please register for the retreat as soon as possible, not later than September 1.



The retreat will feature different activities on each of the three days. On Monday, Dr. Ed McCormack will lead us in an opening discussion on Ignatian Spirituality. Those who have been with IVC for a while will recall that Ed also led the Winter Day of Reflection at the Dominican Retreat House in McLean, Virginia in January 2013, the last time that our annual theme centered around Ignatian Spirituality.

In addition to being an ordained permanent deacon in the Archdiocese of Washington, Ed is a member of the formation faculty at the Theological College of the National Seminary at Catholic University since August 2013 and serves as a formation advisor and Director of the Pastoral Placement Formation Program. He completed his Ph.D. in Systematic Theology at The Catholic University of America and his M.A. in Theology at Immaculate Conception Seminary in South Orange, NJ. He has been teaching theology and training men and women for ministry in the church at both the masters and doctoral levels for 13 years.

Upon completion of his Ph.D. in 2001, Ed joined the faculty of the Dominican House of Studies, St. Mary's Seminary and University, and, most recently, he was an associate professor of Christian Spirituality and the Chair of the Spirituality Department at Washington Theological Union, Washington, DC. While holding these positions, he taught courses in Systematic Theology and Christian Spirituality, specializing in Ignatian Spirituality. Deacon McCormack was also an adjunct professor in Georgetown University's Department of Theology. For 12 years, he co-directed Biblical study tours in the Holy Land.

Ed is also an accomplished author; some of his most recent articles are titled: “Ignatian Insights into Accompanying Another through Loss” in *Presence: An International Journal of Spiritual Direction*, Spring 2014; “The Role of St. Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises in Seminary Formation” in *Seminary Journal*, Spring 2013 and “Three Steps to Preaching Preparation,” in *Deacon Digest*, March 2013.

The second day of the retreat will find us on a motor coach for most of the day as we complete a Southern Maryland Catholic Pilgrimage tour of five churches in the vicinity of the retreat house. Fr. Tom Clifford, S.J., pastor of St. Ignatius Church Chapel Point and former IVC spiritual reflector when he was pastor of St. Aloysius in Washington, DC, has agreed to join us as our pilgrimage guide that day. He will celebrate Mass at one of the churches that we will visit and lunch will be offered at another. The pilgrimage route is still being finalized.

On Wednesday, we close the retreat with a ‘fishbowl discussion’ initiated by seasoned IVC volunteers on implementing Ignatian Spiritual practices in daily life and with a ritual that will be familiar to those of you who have attended past opening retreats. Please make plans to be with us in September! It should be an uplifting three days.

The Guest



WASHED INTO THE DOORWAY
by the wake of traffic,
he wears humanity
like a third-hand shirt
—blackened with enough
of Manhattan’s dirt to sprout
a tree, or poison one.
His empty hand has led him
where he has come to.
Our differences claim us.
He holds out his hand,
in need of all that’s mine.
And so we’re joined, as deep
as son and father. His life
is offered me to choose.
Shall I begin servitude
to him? Let this cup pass.
Who am I? But charity must
suppose, knowing no better,
that this man is a man fallen
among thieves, or come
to this strait by no fault

—that our difference
is not a judgment,
though I can afford to eat
and am made his judge.
I am, I nearly believe,
the Samaritan who fell
into the ambush of his heart
on the way to another place.
My stranger waits, his hand
held out like something to read,
as though its emptiness
is an accomplishment.
I give him a smoke and the price
of a meal, no more
—not sufficient kindness
or believable sham.
I paid him to remain strange
to my threshold and table,
to permit me to forget him—
knowing I won’t. He’s the guest
of my knowing, though not asked.

Wendell Berry

Upcoming Events

New Volunteers' Orientation
September 1, 2015
9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Missionhurst,
4651 25th St N, Arlington, VA
22207

Fall 2015
Retreat:
September 14-16, 2015
Loyola Retreat House
Faulkner, MD.
ED MCCORMACK, FACILITATOR

Northern Virginia Region 2015-16 City Groups

Our Lady Queen of Peace 2700 19th Street South Arlington, VA 22204 2nd Tuesday 10:00 am-12:00 noon	St. Charles Location: To Be Determined 2nd Thursday 10:00 am-12:00 noon	St. John Neumann's 11900 Lawyers Road Reston VA 20191 3rd Tuesday 10:00 am-12:00 noon	St. Joseph's 711 Columbus Street, N. Alexandria, VA 22314 3rd Wednesday 10:00 am-12:00 noon
October 13, 2015	October 8, 2015	October 20, 2015	October 21, 2015
November 10, 2015	November 12, 2015	November 17, 2015	November 18, 2015
TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
February 9, 2015	February 11, 2016	February 16, 2016	February 17, 2016
March 8, 2016	March 10, 2016	March 15, 2016	March 16, 2016
April 12, 2016	April 14, 2016	April 19, 2016	April 20, 2016
May 10, 2016	May 12, 2016	May 17, 2016	May 18, 2016

DC/Metro MD Region 2015-16 City Groups

The Albrecht's 5814 Ogden Court, Bethesda, MD 20816 1st. Thurs.—9:30—11:30	Wash. Jesuit Academy 900 Varnum St., NE Washington, DC 20017 2nd Tuesday—11:00-1:00	Riderwood 3140 Gracefield Rd. Silver Spring, MD 20904 3rd Wednesday—1:30-3:30
October 1, 2015	October 13, 2015	October 31, 2015
November 5, 2015	November 10, 2015	November 18, 2015
December TBD	December TBD	December TBD
February 4, 2016	February 9, 2016	February 17, 2016
March 3, 2016	March 8, 2016	March 16, 2016
April 7, 2016	April 12, 2016	April 20, 2016
May 5, 2016	May 10, 2016	May 18, 2016

